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New York

President:	Mr. Lavrov	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Bulgaria	Mr. Raytchev
	Cameroon	Mr. Tidjani
	Chile	Mr. Muñoz
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	France	Mr. Duclos
	Germany	Mr. Pleuger
	Guinea	Mr. Boubacar Diallo
	Mexico	Mr. Pujalte
	Pakistan	Mr. Akram
	Spain	Mr. Arias
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. King
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

The situation in Guinea-Bissau

Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and on the activities of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in that country (S/2003/621)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

03-40108 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Guinea-Bissau

Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and on the activities of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in that country (S/2003/621)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and with the consent of the Council, I shall take it that the Council agrees to extend an invitation to the representative of Guinea-Bissau to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mrs. dos Santos Jaló (Guinea-Bissau) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Gambia, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Grey-Johnson (Gambia) took the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. David Stephen, Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Stephen to take a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Mr. Dumisani Kumalo, Chairman of the Economic and Social Council Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Kumalo to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and on the activities of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in that country (S/2003/621).

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. David Stephen, Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau, and Mr. Dumisani Kumalo, Chairman of the Economic and Social Council Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau.

I shall now give the floor to Mr. David Stephen, Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau.

Mr. Stephen: The report before the Council, contained in document S/2003/621, is the fourteenth report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and on the activities of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS).

As members will recall, I briefed the Security Council on 5 March on developments in Guinea-Bissau since 13 December 2002, when the last report of the Secretary-General (S/2002/1367) was issued. Members of the Council will also recall that, following my last briefing, in March, the Council, in a statement to the

press, expressed concern at the political instability in the country and appealed to the Government to ensure that the forthcoming legislative elections are conducted in a transparent, fair and credible manner. The present report covers developments since that briefing, concentrating on the situation in the country in advance of legislative elections, due on 6 July 2003. It also describes the contributions of UNOGBIS, in collaboration with the United Nations country team on the ground, to promote conditions conducive to free and fair legislative elections.

Since my last briefing, in March, the overall situation in Guinea-Bissau has worsened. The opposition continues to accuse the Government of restrictions on civil liberties. Donors have conditioned financial support for the elections on the creation by the Government of conditions propitious for credible elections. The caretaker Government continues in office, while the National Assembly remains dissolved. Judicial institutions continue to be weak.

With regard to the electoral process, at President Kumba Yalá's request, the United Nations Development Programme has continued to provide technical assistance to the National Electoral Commission. UNOGBIS will be prepared to coordinate international observation should conditions on the ground be conducive to free and fair elections.

To reassess the electoral preparations on the ground, an electoral needs assessment mission of the Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political Affairs visited the country between 5 and 11 June. The mission noted that it is not technically feasible for the elections to be held on 6 July and urged the authorities to undertake the planned electoral census, or revision of the electoral registers, with a minimum of delay. While the President has concurred with the view that the polling date cannot be maintained, he has yet to announce publicly that the elections will be postponed and that a new calendar of electoral activities is under consideration. However, some progress has been made towards launching the voter registration.

While it is encouraging that the country remains peaceful, regrettably, the overall economic situation remains critical. The non-payment of months of salary arrears by the Government, amounting to something like $11 million, has raised the level of social frustration, resulting in periodic strikes by public sector workers. The Government has, however, told the trade unions that it intends to pay arrears of wages soon. Since the report was completed, there have been more cabinet changes. In other developments, *Radio Bombolom* continues to function. On 3 June, the former Minister of Defence, as well as President Yalá's Adviser for Political Affairs, who had been detained since April, were provisionally released.

To conclude, allow me to highlight three points made in the observations section of the report. Every effort should be made by the country's elected leaders to return the country to political and constitutional normality, so that the rehabilitation and peace-building agendas can be put back on track.

Secondly, to gain the confidence of the donor community, the Guinea-Bissau leaders have to take concrete measures to ensure the holding of credible legislative elections and to guarantee respect for civil rights and the liberties of citizens of Guinea-Bissau.

Thirdly, in this hour of extreme want, the people of Guinea-Bissau need the support of the international community. To that end, despite concerns about setbacks in peace consolidation and economic recovery in Guinea-Bissau, the United Nations mechanisms, including the Bretton Woods institutions and the United Nations country team on the ground, remain constructively engaged in the country in order to help alleviate the most urgent social needs of the population. Their ongoing efforts, as well as similar actions by Guinea-Bissau's other international partners, are welcome.

The Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa of the Security Council, the recently created Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau of the Economic and Social Council, and the Group of Friends of Guinea-Bissau have continued to work closely to explore ways to assist Guinea-Bissau. The Security Council's forthcoming mission to Guinea-Bissau, with the participation of representatives of the Economic and Social Council, is a timely initiative. The Secretary-General hopes that this mission will further encourage a productive and constructive dialogue between the Guinea-Bissau Government and the international community.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank the Chairman of the Security Council's Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa for inviting me and the Resident Coordinator two days

ago to brief members of the Working Group, the Ad Hoc Advisory Group established by the Economic and Social Council and the Group of Friends of Guinea-Bissau in advance of the Security Council's mission to Guinea-Bissau.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I call on His Excellency Mr. Dumisani Kumalo, Chairman of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau established by the Economic and Social Council.

Mr. Kumalo: I thank the Security Council for inviting me to participate in my capacity as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau established by the Economic and Social Council. I am also representing the President of the Economic and Social Council, Ambassador Gert Rosenthal of Guatemala, who could not be with us today. For us, it is important that the Security Council has again invited the Economic and Social Council to exchange views on the matter of peace and security in Guinea-Bissau. We greatly appreciate and thank the Council for this opportunity.

It is significant that there will again be a joint visit to Guinea-Bissau by members of the Security Council and members of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau established by the Economic and Social Council. That visit next week will convey a collective message that we wish to strengthen the confidence between the people of Guinea-Bissau and their international partners.

The Secretary-General has captured the situation in Guinea-Bissau probably in the most sobering words contained in paragraph 3 of his report (S/2003/621). He writes that "I regret to say that in the reporting period the overall situation in Guinea-Bissau has not improved. In fact, it has worsened".

Guinea-Bissau is a country that is still emerging from conflict. As we have already reported to the Economic and Social Council, Guinea-Bissau first emerged from conflict three years ago and even received post-conflict assistance from donors and the Bretton Woods institutions. In fact, Guinea-Bissau was among the countries that benefited from their inclusion in the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. As the Secretary-General confirms in his report, the economic, social and political situation in the country suggests that Guinea-Bissau may be sliding back towards chaos and even conflict.

At the present moment, Guinea-Bissau is a country that exists in a grey area, and that therefore presents the international community with a unique challenge. The instruments that the Security Council employs to maintain international peace and security do not apply to Guinea-Bissau. Neither does Guinea-Bissau qualify for the instruments that donors and the Bretton Woods institutions provide to countries that are in a post-conflict phase. Yet, in spite of that challenge, the Secretary-General reports that "the political will of the international community to provide support to Guinea-Bissau and its people is palpable" (*S/2003/621, para. 27*).

Guinea-Bissau is a country with a democratically elected head of State, President Koumba Yalá, with a full Cabinet of ministers assigned various portfolios. At this time, the one critical institution that Guinea-Bissau does not have is a parliament of elected representatives who can make decisions about the direction the country needs to follow in addressing political, economic and social matters.

For several months, Guinea-Bissau has awaited an election that has already been once postponed. There is general agreement that the situation in Guinea-Bissau may change for the better as soon as a parliament is back in place. The Secretary-General has reported that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has made available an initial grant of $500,000 to support electoral registers; and Portugal, which is among the Friends of Guinea-Bissau, has provided the necessary materials for holding an election.

What appear to be missing are conditions for holding free and fair parliamentary elections. However, the fact that a few years ago the people of Guinea-Bissau participated in a national election that was declared to be free and fair is an encouraging sign. We urge the international community to give the necessary support for a credible election to be held in Guinea-Bissau.

We note that the Secretary-General has reported that preparations for such an election have been slow, since "donors have conditioned financial support for the elections on the creation of propitious conditions for credible elections" (*ibid., para. 6*). As long as Guinea-Bissau does not have a parliament, questions of governance will remain, thereby discouraging donors from providing desperately needed assistance.

The humanitarian situation in Guinea-Bissau is worsening all the time. United Nations agencies continue to report that hundreds of children are dying from hunger and preventable diseases. There are reports of civil servants, including teachers and nurses, who have not been paid for many months. The World Food Programme (WFP) has been operating feeding schemes for more than 80,000 children since the beginning of this year. Recently, more than 2,000 metric tons of rice donated by Japan, another Friend of Guinea-Bissau, have been delivered to the country. We are encouraged that the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have continued to send missions to Guinea-Bissau to help create systems under which this country can receive and manage international aid.

Despite all those signs indicating willingness by the international community to assist the people of Guinea-Bissau, the world expects more from the Government of Guinea-Bissau. As the Secretary-General states in his report, "The lack of progress in the constitutional and electoral spheres has been mirrored by the general deterioration in the political climate" (*ibid., para. 4*). To further quote the Secretary-General, "more is needed to restore confidence and trust within the country and between Guinea-Bissau and its international partners" (*ibid., para. 28*). We believe that the uncertainty of the political situation has an impact on efforts to address the humanitarian needs of the country.

The upcoming joint visit to Guinea-Bissau by members of the Security Council and members of the Economic and Social Council Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau will offer an opportunity to engage the authorities in finding a way out of this situation. The objectives we in the Economic and Social Council have set for ourselves will be to promote a dialogue with the authorities of Guinea-Bissau, to appeal to the Government to take measures to prepare for the forthcoming elections and to ensure that they are seen to be free and fair, to promote a better understanding between Guinea-Bissau authorities and the donor community, and to address the humanitarian situation in the country.

We believe that those objectives coincide very well with those that members of the Security Council have set for themselves. We look forward to a historic and successful visit to Guinea-Bissau.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Guinea-Bissau.

Mrs. dos Santos Jaló (Guinea-Bissau): The creation of a security advisory group on conflict prevention in countries emerging from conflict is yet another part of the United Nations battle for peace and security in the world. Today we are discussing one such country, Guinea-Bissau.

Let me express my deep appreciation for the attention that the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council have been paying to countries emerging from conflict, especially Guinea-Bissau. Today, we are discussing the report of the Representative of the Secretary-General in Guinea-Bissau. As one can see from the report, Secretary-General Kofi Annan has discussed the political, economic and social situation in Guinea-Bissau, which remains of great concern.

It had been quite some time since the Economic and Social Council Ad Hoc Advisory Group has visited the country with representatives of the Bretton Woods institutions. At that time, they went over the details of the problems in Guinea-Bissau by meeting with President Yalá, members of the Government, opposition figures, the media, civil society and people of all stripes. All these efforts were made to better understand the situation in the country and find better ways to address the economic crisis and calm social tensions.

Those efforts continued after the return of the delegation from Bissau. The group produced a report that puts forward very positive recommendations. The report states that both sides must work with each other in a spirit of partnership and compromise.

It has not yet been possible to implement such an approach, for reasons that will become clear during the visit to Guinea-Bissau. I shall arrive in the country two days before the delegations of the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council. In saying this, I am continuing to appeal to the international community not to give up helping the people and Government of Guinea-Bissau to find a way out from the deep crisis in which we now find ourselves.

I would also like to make some comments about the positive parts of the report, including the military and security aspects. A positive sign is that the World

Bank is helping the Government find a way to pay some of the arrears to teachers and to feed some 80,000 children of Guinea-Bissau. Another positive part of the report concerns the United Nations Children's Fund programme to promote early childhood development and to feed children.

I am aware of the fact that the situation in Guinea-Bissau requires that we do more than simply maintain order at the border with Senegal. We must also bring calm to the cities and villages of Guinea-Bissau by improving the security of the people and breaking down all kinds of barriers that prevent the country from moving towards development and peace.

I will not end my statement without appealing yet again to the international community for its support. As I said before, it must not give up on Guinea-Bissau. I appeal to it to continue to help the country. Problems exist and must be resolved. How is this to be done? If we must wait until everything is in place before assistance is given to the country to hold elections, I believe the population will continue to suffer. This is not what either the United Nations or the international community as a whole would want.

Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to the donors that continue to help the country, such as Italy, which has forgiven 100 per cent of debt, Japan, which has donated rice, and the other countries that in emergencies have provided money to calm the situation. I would like to voice my appreciation to all those in the international community who are fighting for improvements in the country.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Gambia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Grey-Johnson (Gambia): My delegation intervenes in our capacity as Chair of the Group of Friends of Guinea-Bissau.

Let me at the outset commend you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting to afford us yet another opportunity for reflection on the post-conflict phenomenon that the case of Guinea-Bissau has come to represent. This is a country that, to all intents and purposes, is still stuck in the transition to full democracy, even though some years back it was able to conduct multiparty elections that were deemed to have been free and fair. It is a country that is still in transition, because the structures and institutions that make for a functioning democracy, though provided for in law, are in reality extremely weak and unable to sustain the workings of a democratic system. The political culture that would allow for meaningful operation of a multiparty parliamentary system is still in the making and society finds itself at the rudimentary stages of maturation, making it difficult for the workings of a truly democratic system to take root.

It is to the Security Council's credit that it has come to realize that in the matter of the transition of soft States from conflict to democracy there are many grey areas and phases fraught with all sorts of difficulty, through which the country in question has to be assisted, nurtured and guided. Hence the effort to concert with the Economic and Social Council to work out appropriate courses of action through the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau to help the country come out of the woods. Having participated in the work of the Advisory Group since its inception, I have come to experience and share the frustration of its members at the difficulty of bringing our work to a meaningful conclusion and with positive results in support of Guinea-Bissau's democratic transition.

Although the temptation is to hastily place the blame for lack of progress at Guinea-Bissau's feet, we all know that in certain of our demands, we may be asking that the country shoulder certain responsibilities that are clearly beyond its strength to carry. Countries emerging from conflict are typically countries with severely reduced capacities — in governance, economic management, security and social protection. Guinea-Bissau falls perfectly into that category of countries. Yet, because the country was able to hold multi-party elections that were deemed to have been free and fair, the international system expects it to demonstrate similar strengths in other key areas in which it has still to build sufficient capacity. What is more, we penalize it for failing to perform to our expectations.

It is in that way that Guinea-Bissau has suffered under an unofficial regime of sanctions over the last two to three years. Development support has all but slowed to a halt in the context of a severe economic crisis. The social situation remains dire, particularly as it relates to the plight of the vulnerable — children, women and the poor, who make up the majority of the population. The performance of one indicator alone is

sufficient to illustrate the point. The United Nations Children's Fund has informed the Economic and Social Council's Ad Hoc Advisory Group that, out of a population of 1.2 million people, there were 1,000 deaths per month in Guinea-Bissau among children under five years of age. That is unacceptably high by any standard, but even more so under peacetime conditions. Why is the international community allowing this outrage to continue? Because it seems to want to punish a country it feels is not playing by the rules. But could it be that the country is not able to play by the rules? That is the question that must engage reflection on Guinea-Bissau. Hopefully, we shall eventually come to be of one mind on this issue and then begin the process of empowering a country in need, showing more of the carrot and less of the stick. When that happens, I hope that the appropriate response will be forthcoming in the form of emergency humanitarian assistance, development support, capacity-building programmes and so on.

I sincerely hope that the forthcoming Security Council mission to Guinea-Bissau will afford us all another opportunity to reconsider the parameters of, and reassess our approach to, peace-building and conflict management and countries with severely weakened capacities.

Let me seize this opportunity to commend the Representative of the Secretary-General and all the staff members of the United Nations in Guinea-Bissau for their commitment and dedication to service under very difficult conditions.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): Let me begin by thanking you, Mr. President, for scheduling this open meeting on Guinea-Bissau, thereby providing a clear demonstration of your commitment and that of the Council to the need to improve the situation in Guinea-Bissau. I would also like to thank Mr. David Stephen for his comprehensive briefing on the situation in Guinea-Bissau. We had an opportunity to benefit from his experience on the ground last Tuesday during the meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, in which the Economic and Social Council's Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau and the Group of Friends also participated. All of them have contributed to this meeting this morning. I commend them for the good work they are doing for the people of Guinea-Bissau. I also wish to commend the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau for its role in promoting political dialogue in Guinea-Bissau and for preparing a countrywide programme of activities to consolidate the process of national reconciliation, which, in our view, is the key to any progress in the area of political stability.

I also welcome the opportunity given to us to address the issue of Guinea-Bissau more frequently. The current situation in that country requires our attention. It should continue to receive the international community's attention. The joint Economic and Social Council and Security Council mission that will visit Guinea-Bissau in a few days is a welcome and timely development.

The report of the Secretary-General (S/2003/621) describes the situation in Guinea-Bissau as critical, and therefore in need of concrete and urgent steps by the Government of Guinea-Bissau and the international community. In that connection, while we look forward to visiting Guinea-Bissau, the critical message of the Council should focus not only on the need for commitment by the Government. In particular, the Council should ensure that the international community maintains its interest in helping the people of that country to address the fragile political situation and the persistent economic crisis.

With regard to the forthcoming legislative elections, we fully agree on the role to be played by the Government. At the same time, we should continue to call upon the donor community to provide the necessary financial assistance to enable the Government of Guinea-Bissau to fulfil its duties. I would like to thank the Governments that have met their commitments, thereby keeping hope alive for the people of Guinea-Bissau.

In order to address the situation in Guinea-Bissau we should always keep in mind the specificities of a country facing a complex of not only political, but primarily social and economic, problems due to various causes. The issue of the country's specific conditions has been understood by the Bretton Woods institutions, which have reclassified Guinea-Bissau as a low-income country under stress. The World Bank has also proposed that the authorities of Guinea-Bissau formulate an alternative staff-monitoring programme to provide a framework for donors by which to decide upon the effectiveness and continuation of their assistance in the current circumstances. Meanwhile, due to the urgent needs of the country, it is important to

demonstrate flexibility on both sides in order to facilitate the move from theory to practice, taking into account the fact that long-lasting economic solutions are also meaningful for achieving political stability in Guinea-Bissau.

It is clearly stated in the report of the Secretary-General that public dissatisfaction and frustration have resulted in periodic strikes by the public sector. That situation, and the consequent humanitarian crisis, can lead to a cycle of violence that will be more costly to address for the international community. To tackle the crisis, the work of the specialized agencies of the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and other donors will be a determining factor that should continue to have our political support.

The number of countries emerging from conflict in Africa is increasing. Guinea-Bissau constitutes a test for the international community in managing a post-conflict situation and in cooperation between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. There is therefore a need to succeed in this case if we are to extend this experience to other post-conflict situations. In the search for a long-lasting solution in Guinea-Bissau, the involvement of regional players is an important tool in supplementing the work of the Security Council. We therefore welcome the involvement of such regional players.

As the report of the Secretary-General states, my country, in its capacity as the Chairman of the Organization of Portuguese-speaking African States, has spared no effort to lend its assistance to finding a way forward in Guinea-Bissau. I would also like to commend the Economic Community of West African States for its efforts to find ways to resolve the crisis in that country.

The Security Council's forthcoming mission to Guinea-Bissau is the best opportunity both to deliver the Security Council's message and to hear from the people of Guinea-Bissau themselves. Most important will be the implementation of the recommendations to be made by the joint mission. It is therefore important that those recommendations focus on key issues. I look forward to visiting Guinea-Bissau for these reasons.

Mr. Pleuger (Germany): My delegation would like to thank Mr. Stephen and Ambassador Kumalo for their reports. I must say that these reports paint a very bleak picture of the situation in Guinea-Bissau. The country stands on the brink of collapse. The economic situation is desolate. Good governance is absent. Freedom of the press and freedom of opinion are increasingly restricted and human rights violations further illustrate the dire situation of the country.

All efforts of the international community to engage the President and the Government of Guinea-Bissau in a constructive dialogue have so far yielded no results. The International Monetary Fund has withdrawn, World Bank projects will not continue to be financed as planned, and yet the donor community is fully prepared to assist Guinea-Bissau if Guinea-Bissau does its own part. This was again confirmed this week at the meeting of the Security Council Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa with the Group of Friends of Guinea-Bissau, the Economic and Social Council Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau and representatives of the United Nations system.

We feel that, in this situation, three points are essential. The first problem that must be addressed is the need for a functioning elected National Assembly. Parliamentary elections must take place as soon as technically feasible. That such elections are feasible, I think, was proven by the fact that free and fair elections took place only a few years ago in that country. Yesterday, the European Union issued a declaration on Guinea-Bissau that lists the conditions which are indispensable for free, fair and democratic elections. Provided that these principles are adhered to, the European Union and Germany, as a member of the European Union, are willing to fund the electoral process. We will thereby be heeding the appeal made by Ambassador Kumalo.

Secondly, human rights must be respected. As a member of the Group of Friends of Guinea-Bissau, Germany is prepared to support sustainable solutions that will help Guinea-Bissau to overcome its crisis. However, solutions must be based on full respect for human rights and the principles of good governance. That brings me to my third and last point.

The separation between the executive, judicial and legislative powers in Guinea-Bissau must be restored and the budget must be handled responsibly and transparently. It is our hope that the Security Council's visit to the West African region will be able to impress on the authorities in Guinea-Bissau that adherence to these basic principles of good governance are a prerequisite for the return of Guinea-Bissau to

democracy and to sustained development that benefits its people.

Mr. Cunningham (United States of America): I should like to express my appreciation for Mr. Stephen's report and commend him and his staff for their hard work in Guinea-Bissau, especially in the area of addressing human rights. I also thank Ambassador Kumalo for his report and the representatives of Gambia and Guinea-Bissau for their contributions, which were interesting elements to add to our discussion.

We are very concerned about the fragile human rights situation in Guinea-Bissau, as well as about the worsening social and economic situation that others have referred to. All of this is worsening political tension and contributing to potential instability. The United States believes that current conditions are not conducive to free, fair and credible elections on 6 July. We believe that the United Nations should consider making its assistance to those elections conditional on clear and irrevocable steps by the Government to ensure that the elections are free and fair. We would not want the United Nations to lend legitimacy to a fundamentally flawed election process.

We also call on the Government of Guinea-Bissau to take concrete steps regarding its rehabilitation and peace-building agendas, including commitments on the promulgation of the new constitution, the election of the President and Vice-President of the Supreme Court of Justice and the holding of fair and transparent legislative elections. These commitments should include guarantees that the opposition can participate in the legislative elections without harassment and with equal access to the media.

We also want to urge the Government of Guinea-Bissau to demonstrate a stronger commitment to democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights, as well as to engage in a constructive dialogue with the international community on meaningful ways to improve its economic governance so as to restore donor confidence.

Four years ago, this Council, along with many other bodies of the United Nations system, served as an emergency room to address the armed conflict in Guinea-Bissau. Four years later, Guinea-Bissau is still in intensive care. It has shown signs that it may be returning to a point of crisis. The international community can and will help — we are confident of that — but the Government of Guinea-Bissau must itself take urgent steps to stop the downward course it is currently on.

The Security Council delegation, when it arrives in Guinea-Bissau next week, will press upon the Government the need to create basic conditions for democratic governance, peace and stability. Doing so will help, in the words of the Secretary-General in his report before us today,

> "to restore confidence and trust within the country and between Guinea-Bissau and its international partners". (*S/2003/621, para. 28*)

In conclusion, I want to express our appreciation to the French delegation for preparing a draft presidential statement, which we will approve in coming days and which the United States supports.

Mr. Diallo (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): This public meeting, which is being held on the eve of the joint mission of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council to West Africa, is most timely. The mission will provide us with the opportunity to assess the unresolved problems confronting Guinea-Bissau so as to enable a direct, frank and constructive dialogue with players at all levels.

I wish to thank the Representative of the Secretary-General, the Head of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau; the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau of the Economic and Social Council, the Ambassador of South Africa; and the Ambassador of Gambia, the Chairman of the Group of Friends of Guinea-Bissau, for their important statements this morning on the situation in that country.

As the most recent report of the Secretary-General indicates, the situation in Guinea-Bissau, ever worrisome, has further deteriorated since the holding of free and fair general elections. It indicates above all that major and varied problems confront the authorities in the pursuit of the democratic process.

In this regard, my delegation notes that, in spite of certain aspects that have been described, this gloomy picture is attributable first and foremost — let us not forget — to the legacy of a war of liberation and successive conflicts arising, inter alia, from difficulties linked to the slow implementation of the programme to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate ex-combatants. Moreover, the impact of a wrecked economy that

depends solely on revenue from mahogany must be taken into account. In other words, the international community has not massively intervened in Guinea-Bissau to consolidate the new-found peace and to assist in reconstruction by creating a viable programme to accompany the democratization process.

It is now recognized that these are complementary stages in a country in a post-conflict situation. Progress made at one stage has a bearing on the success of the following stage. We must bear that in mind in the case of Guinea-Bissau.

My delegation remains convinced of the urgent need for Guinea-Bissau to take courageous political measures and believes that those measures must be accompanied by the palpable improvement of the country's economic situation, through adequate financial assistance from the international community. The restructuring of its institutions depends upon it, and the holding of new free and legitimate elections justifies that reasonable request.

Therefore, my delegation would like, here and now, to renew its appeal to the donor community, in particular the Bretton Woods institutions, to show more flexibility in their understanding of how to solve the ongoing problems in Guinea-Bissau.

In our opinion, a realistic plan for recovery must be designed to assist Guinea-Bissau, based on planned and coordinated assistance and requiring equally realistic results.

Mr. Zhang Yishan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation wishes to thank the Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. David Stephen, and the Permanent Representative of South Africa, Ambassador Kumalo, for their briefings.

I listened very closely to the statement made by the representative of Guinea-Bissau. The report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Guinea-Bissau (S/2003/621) is very comprehensive and provides the Council with a wealth of timely information. We agree with the Secretary-General's assessment of the situation in Guinea-Bissau as set forth in his report.

Guinea-Bissau, where the situation had seemed very promising as the country embarked on the path to rehabilitation, reconstruction and peace-building, following the end of the armed conflict of 1998 and 1999 and the holding of general elections, has recently witnessed mounting tension and finds itself at a critical juncture. We hope that all parties concerned in Guinea-Bissau will put the fundamental interests of the nation and the people above all other considerations and will take effective measures to ensure that Guinea-Bissau does not relapse into turmoil and strife. We also believe that the international community is duty-bound to pay greater attention to the question of Guinea-Bissau and to help its Government consolidate the hard-won achievements of peace of two years ago.

China commends the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau, the Security Council's Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, the Economic and Social Council's Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau, the Group of Friends of Guinea-Bissau, the Economic Community of West African States and the Organization of Portuguese-speaking African States for their efforts to promote stability and to consolidate peace in Guinea-Bissau. We earnestly hope that those bodies and organizations will continue to enhance their cooperation with one another. China also appeals to the members of the international community, particularly of the donor community, to fulfil and increase their pledges of assistance to Guinea-Bissau in a timely manner.

The Security Council will soon send a mission to Guinea-Bissau. We wish it success, and we believe that it will be a successful mission contributing to moving the situation in Guinea-Bissau towards stability.

The Chinese delegation supports the presidential statement prepared by the French delegation, whose work we appreciate.

Mr. Muñoz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the report of the Secretary-General on Guinea-Bissau (S/2003/621). Its introduction today was very timely, given the imminent departure of the Security Council's mission to Western Africa.

We regret the import of the report insofar as it relates the deterioration of the political and economic situation in the country. As early as the beginning of this year, the Security Council had been warned of several disturbing signs and of the need for the political leadership to take additional steps to prevent the country from slipping back into a dynamic of conflict. Such a situation would be highly regrettable, given the tragic examples of other countries of the region that have today sunken into civil war.

The additional necessary steps, as we know, are the final promulgation of the new constitution, the establishment of conditions for holding genuinely democratic elections and unconditional respect for human rights and civil liberties. Those steps have not yet taken place. That naturally concerns us, who ourselves suffered the costs of the violation of human rights in our country's now fortunately distant past. However, we have to recognize that the reopening and operation of *Radio Bombolom* constitutes a positive step.

Conspiring against the desired stability of the political situation is the grave economic and social situation in which thousands of citizens of Guinea-Bissau are struggling. Also serious is the State's inability to pay the salaries of civil servants. On past occasions, we have seen the result of the destructive combination of political instability, the grave deterioration of economic conditions and the erosion of State authority. The result is quite simply the outbreak of greater conflict, which would inevitably have disastrous consequences for the innocent civilian population.

On previous occasions, we have underlined the importance of attending to the social and economic needs of countries such as Guinea-Bissau in order to defuse conflicts before they occur; their resolution at a later stage is too costly in human terms. We reiterate our appeal to the donor community and the international financial institutions not to abandon Guinea-Bissau to its fate but to continue to explore creative formulas that would allow us to maintain our hope.

However, we insist that all the efforts of the international community will be useless without the firm resolve of, in particular, the Government, the political parties, civil organizations and all relevant national actors to commit themselves unreservedly to the cause of peace, development and well-being of their own people. On this occasion, we firmly reiterate the appeal to all parties to shoulder their responsibilities.

Finally, the case of Guinea-Bissau is of special importance because it could constitute a model of coordinated effort between the Security Council and other United Nations organs such as the Economic and Social Council to deal with the problems of countries in pre-conflict and post-conflict situations. As we have noted in various forums and debates on conflicts in Africa, such situations require a multidisciplinary approach. The strategy for social and economic recovery prepared by the Economic and Social Council with the agreement of the Government of Guinea-Bissau belongs to that approach. We express our hope that the Security Council mission will have a constructive and fruitful dialogue with President Yalá and that this will, in turn, lead to tangible progress preventing a deterioration that would be damaging to the country and, even more importantly, damaging to its people.

For all the aforementioned reasons, we support the presidential statement, coordinated by the delegation of France, on the situation in Guinea-Bissau.

Mr. Pujalte (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank the Representative of the Secretary-General in Guinea-Bissau, Mr. David Stephen, for introducing presenting the report on the political situation in that country (S/2003/621). Mexico regrets the fact that since 5 March 2003, the date of the most recent Security Council consultations on Guinea-Bissau, the situation in that country and the political, economic and human rights aspects of the situation have deteriorated. With respect to paragraph 4 of the Secretary-General's report, my delegation expresses its concern at the alleged harassment of the Government's political opponents by security officials.

Mexico reiterates its position that parliamentary elections must be carried out only when all the necessary conditions exist so that they can be inclusive, fair and transparent and can be supervised by both national and international electoral observers. In that context, Mexico supports the Secretary-General's decision to dispatch another electoral mission to Guinea-Bissau to review the situation in that country.

Mexico believes that, in order to consolidate the peace, the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau should strengthen its disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes for former combatants and should intensify its demining efforts.

We cannot overlook the fact that Guinea-Bissau itself must undertake measures to foster political stability, good governance, respect for human rights and sound financial and economic management. The promotion of the rule of law, the swiftest possible

promulgation of the constitution, and the election of the President and the Vice-President of the Supreme Court would help to restore confidence in the country and in its institutions, which would help to create the right conditions for the Bretton Woods institutions and the international community to respond positively by providing emergency financial support and technical assistance to Guinea-Bissau.

Mexico will spare no effort to ensure that the upcoming Security Council mission to Guinea-Bissau will help to find a peaceful and negotiated solution to the current crisis. Mexico believes that the Council mission is an invaluable opportunity to strengthen the political process in Guinea-Bissau and to define opportunities to promote economic and social development for its people.

In conclusion, my delegation appeals to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and to the Organization of Portuguese-speaking African States to renew their efforts to mediate among Guinea-Bissau's various political forces with a view to finding a peaceful and constructive settlement to the current political and socio-economic crisis. Mexico also urges that the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau, the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa and ECOWAS work together in a coordinated way, to the greatest extent possible and in accordance with their mandates, in the quest for national harmony and to promote the sustainable development of Guinea-Bissau.

Mr. Tidjani (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, Mr. President, I should like to congratulate you on having convened this public meeting on Guinea-Bissau. This subject is very important at a time when the Security Council is actively preparing for the mission that it will send in a few days' time to West Africa, including to Guinea-Bissau, which will be the mission's first stop.

I should also like to thank our special guests for the high quality of their introductory briefings, which informed us of the difficulty of the challenges faced by Guinea-Bissau since the cessation of the armed conflict and of the risk of a reappearance of the conflict. In addition, I must thank the Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS), Mr. David Stephen, for his briefing, which, as usual, was particularly informative, detailed and precise. I should also like to tell him and the whole UNOGBIS team how much Cameroon appreciates the remarkable work that they do every day to help Guinea-Bissau to consolidate the peace and to restore itself socio-economically.

From the Secretary-General's report (S/2003/621), we see that the political and socio-economic situation in Guinea-Bissau has deteriorated further and remains a source of grave concern. The persistence of political tensions, the radicalization of the regime at this juncture and the deterioration of the human rights situation are factors of potential instability. Added to that is a particularly disastrous economic and social situation that gives Guinea-Bissau one of the lowest human development indices and makes an already tenuous social climate even more fragile. Thus, the situation in Guinea-Bissau is so anaemic that the country has accumulated enormous salary arrears amounting to approximately $11 million, and Ambassador Kumalo just referred to hundreds of children who are dying of hunger.

Clearly, the situation in Guinea-Bissau requires urgent and vigorous action by the international community. It also requires, first of all, the continued commitment of the citizens of Guinea-Bissau themselves, on whom rests the primary responsibility to resolve their problems. At the very least, the Security Council's efforts to make its contribution to the success of Guinea-Bissau's experience in the area of post-conflict rehabilitation in Africa must reflect a constant search for a balance between the need for the support of the international community and the political will of the country emerging from conflict. Those two rationales, which serve the same objective of post-conflict relief and reconstruction, need to go hand in hand. Undoubtedly, the political will of Guinea-Bissau and the resolve of the international community — particularly of the United Nations — cannot fail to provide substantial support, where it is needed, to the process of Guinea-Bissau's post-conflict restoration.

Cameroon therefore wishes to join the Secretary-General in acknowledging the commitment made several months ago by the Bretton Woods institutions to respond to the urgent needs of Guinea-Bissau's population. However, my country hopes and requests that that commitment be more specific, taking into account urgent current needs, particularly Guinea-

Bissau's lack of liquidity, whose sad result is the country's inability to pay its public servants, including teachers.

In our view, the World Bank must consider without delay the possibility of forgiving debt to restore and rebuild the economy in order to reduce social tensions, which would help to change the political climate. With the support of the United Nations Development Programme, the diligent finalization of poverty reduction strategies could also help to reconcile Guinea-Bissau's authorities with the international financial institutions and make additional resources available. Promoting a constructive dialogue among Guinea-Bissau, the international community and the Bretton Woods institutions requires that we seriously consider easing or lightening the short-term conditions imposed by donors on that country, which is not currently in a position to meet them and lacks the means to do so. Indeed, the Chairman of the Group of Friends of Guinea-Bissau just asked us to consider that. He welcomed the fact that, in January, the Economic and Social Council approved the special report of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau, which suggests, among other recommendations, the establishment of a partnership between Guinea-Bissau and the donor community.

We also welcome the fact that the mandate of the Advisory Group has been extended to July 2003. Cameroon reiterates its full support for the recommendations in the report of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group, and we encourage interested parties to create conditions that will make this partnership a reality, in the interest of the people of Guinea-Bissau.

The upcoming legislative elections will no doubt be decisive in easing the political climate and will be an opportunity to demonstrate the democratic maturity of the people of Guinea-Bissau. In all circumstances, the political forces must give priority to dialogue and cooperation, taking this new opportunity to consolidate the peace process and to tackle resolutely the challenges of economic rehabilitation and reconstruction facing that country. We believe that the holding of free, transparent and regular elections will contribute to strengthening the credibility of Guinea-Bissau and to restoring the trust of its developmental partners. It would also promote the establishment of partnerships with them, particularly with the donor community.

The Guinea-Bissau authorities have committed themselves officially to organizing free and transparent elections. They need the international community. The international community must assist the country, as those authorities have asked, during the electoral process. In that context, we commend the initial subsidy from the United Nations Development Programme and the provision by Portugal of electoral logistical support. We also welcome the decision of the parliamentarians of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries to give financial and logistical support for the preparation and holding of the elections, as well as to provide observers. Cameroon encourages other potential partners to follow those examples with pragmatism.

We have also noted the conclusions of the evaluation mission referred to by Mr. Stephen earlier, and we are pleased to note UNDP's continued technical assistance to the National Electoral Commission.

I wish to express my country's full appreciation for the great creativity of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau, the Security Council's Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, and the Group of Friends of Guinea-Bissau in supporting that country in its reconstruction efforts. The success of the Guinea-Bissau experience will certainly enrich future recovery strategies for post-conflict economic reconstruction within the framework of an ad hoc advisory group created to that end by the Economic and Social Council. The future of Guinea-Bissau depends on that.

Finally, my delegation thanks the French delegation for having submitted a draft presidential statement, and it commends it for the manner in which it has conducted the negotiations on that draft. The measured tone and balanced language of the draft statement will create conditions for dialogue that are more favourable for the Security Council mission that will go, in a few days, to Guinea-Bissau. Cameroon concurs with it fully.

Mr. Wehbe (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): We wish to thank you, Mr. President, for holding this open meeting on Guinea-Bissau. It is a contribution to strengthening the efforts of that country and its Government for reform, reconstruction and rehabilitation and for building peace and stability in Guinea-Bissau.

We also wish to thank Mr. David Stephen for introducing the report of the Secretary-General. We appreciate the efforts of his Office and of his colleagues. We also thank Ambassador Kumalo and the Ambassador of Gambia for their important statements on the recent developments in Guinea-Bissau.

We believe that the coming period — during which preparations will be made for holding free and transparent elections and the internal situation, particularly the political and economic situation, will be dealt from a different perspective — will be a decisive phase for Guinea-Bissau, a country which needs the full support and encouragement of the international community and the donor community in order to save itself from its deteriorating economic situation, which is negatively reflected in various walks of life, particularly social and political ones.

We have taken note, and have listened to Mr. Stephen's statement, that officials' salaries, totalling $11 million, have not been paid. That has led to desperation. It is a clear example of the effect of the economic and financial situation on the internal situation in Guinea-Bissau. We also wish to refer, in that regard, to the death of children due to hunger, which has also been referred to by Ambassador Kumalo. In that context, we respect the efforts of the United Nations and of the Secretary-General, and the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Guinea-Bissau, as well as of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS). We thank them all for their great efforts in the difficult circumstances that that country is experiencing. We call upon the Government of Guinea-Bissau to further cooperate with the United Nations in order to support peace and stability there.

The Security Council has understood the importance of this phase that Guinea-Bissau is going through, and that is why it was included in the plan for the mission that will visit West Africa next week. That underscores the importance the Council attaches to that country, to restoring the peace desired. The visit will also be a real opportunity to assess the situation, to accurately inform the Security Council about it and to become familiar with sources of concern in Guinea-Bissau. The mission will give us the opportunity to help that country seek comprehensive and permanent solutions to the situation there.

In that regard, we wish to point out that the regional dimension of the resolution of all crises in African countries also applies to the crisis being faced by Guinea-Bissau. We appreciate the great efforts being made by neighbouring African countries, particularly West African countries and Portuguese-speaking countries. Their efforts greatly affect the search for a peaceful solution between the Government and the various sides and political parties in Guinea-Bissau.

We join the representative of Guinea-Bissau in addressing an appeal to donor countries and the international community at large to provide the necessary financial and humanitarian assistance to enhance stability in the country. We also call on donor countries, financial institutions such as the Bretton Woods institutions and the international community at large to cooperate with the Economic and Social Council to consider offering concessionary terms as a way of addressing the problems of Guinea-Bissau. We must work hard to find more efficient debt relief solutions given the very fragile economic situation, which negatively affects all aspects of life in the country and causes instability. We must take account of the political and economic history of Guinea-Bissau, as the representative of that country mentioned.

In conclusion, we would like to reaffirm the importance of the regional dimension, which is crucial to resolving the problems that Guinea-Bissau faces.

Mr. Duclos (France) (*spoke in French*): I too would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this public meeting. The fact that we have brought together here most of the players involved in Guinea-Bissau strikes me as particularly timely, given that it is clear that a comprehensive approach to the problems of the country is necessary to confront them.

I would like next to thank the Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. David Stephen, for introducing the report of the Secretary-General (S/2003/621) and for his very thorough briefing on the situation in Guinea-Bissau.

Unfortunately, there is no reason to celebrate the facts that we have just been presented. The situation in Guinea-Bissau is indeed cause for concern. Since our consultations last March, it has hardly improved. This is true above all of the political situation, which remains unstable. The date for legislative elections has just been postponed once again. The voter registration

process, which is indispensable for fair and transparent elections, has not yet begun. The political climate is marked by extreme aggression and violence. Financing for the elections and for political parties is not guaranteed.

France wishes to express here its commitment to ensuring that the Guinea-Bissau authorities, particularly President Kumba Yalá, do what is necessary for elections to take place at the earliest possible date, and that they be free, fair and transparent — in a word, democratic. France also endorses the European position that no longer than three months after the end of the elections the President and Vice-President of the Supreme Court should finally be elected. The holding of elections followed by those Supreme Court elections would be concrete proof that the Government of Guinea-Bissau is embarking on a course towards the rule of law.

It goes without saying that the involvement of the international community will also be necessary to guarantee the smooth and democratic conduct of these elections and to stabilize the political situation. Donors must mobilize themselves to provide the necessary financing, and arrangements should be made for sending observers for the elections.

The human rights situation is hardly better. In this regard, the Secretary-General's report speaks of the persistent attacks on freedom of expression and arrests of opposition figures and protesters. France condemns such human rights violations in the strongest terms and appeals to the Government to shoulder its responsibility to put an end to that situation.

The same can be said of the country's economy, which is having trouble finding a way towards growth and development. The responsibility falls above all to the Government of Guinea-Bissau. The country's authorities must opt for a constructive dialogue and become full partners with the international community, as advocated by the Economic and Social Council Ad Hoc Working Group. They must make significant efforts in the area of good governance and make clear commitments to restore the trust of the international community, particularly the Bretton Woods institutions. It is only on this condition that the donor community can bring its full weight to bear on the reconstruction of the country.

I believe that the joint Security Council and Economic and Social Council mission that will be led by the representative of Mexico will show the Council's interest in resolving the many problems that the country must face today. The recent Council mission to Central African has shown the impact that such a mission can have when there is agreement by all on a limited number of strong messages to send to our negotiating partners and when the Council speaks with one voice.

I see that that is the case today. It is in this spirit that, at the expert level, we have prepared a draft presidential statement, which will be adopted shortly.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): At the outset, I would like to thank the Russian presidency for holding this timely and very opportune public meeting on the eve of the Security Council mission to the West African subregion, which will have Guinea-Bissau as its destination. I would like to thank Ambassador Aguilar Zinser for agreeing to lead the mission to Guinea-Bissau.

I would also like to join other speakers in the pleasant duty of expressing our gratitude to Mr. David Stephens, the Representative of the Secretary-General, for presenting the Secretary-General's report on the situation in Guinea-Bissau. I would also like to thank Ambassador Kumalo, whom we are pleased to have with us again today for his comments as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau of the Economic and Social Council as well as Ambassador Johnson for his remarks as Chairman of the Group of Friends of Guinea-Bissau. We have also heard some very pertinent comments here from the Permanent Representative of Guinea-Bissau, on which the Council will need to reflect.

The importance of post-conflict peace-building and social and economic rehabilitation, reconstruction and development has been recognized as an essential requirement for durable peace and security. At the United Nations, Member States are trying evolve ways and means to respond to the requirements of countries like Guinea-Bissau. The coordinated efforts of the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council in the case of Guinea-Bissau have opened the window for further strengthening and institutionalizing the United Nations response at the intergovernmental level to complex crises and situations that are characterized by interlinkages among the security, political, cultural, social, economic and developmental dimensions.

One way of developing a comprehensive approach to such complex crises would be to build on the existing cooperation between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. As my delegation suggested earlier, we could establish ad hoc composite committees, with membership drawn from the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. Such composite committees could generate a coherent and mutually supportive response to complex conflicts and crises that involve multifaceted challenges, such as those in Guinea-Bissau.

If Guinea-Bissau is to be prevented from relapsing into conflict, which is a real fear at this time, we must act quickly and judiciously. The response of the international community, spearheaded by the United Nations, to the peace-building and developmental needs of Guinea-Bissau should constitute a determined effort, based on principles but displaying operational flexibility.

Of course, the primary responsibility rests with the Government of Guinea-Bissau. It must take steps to address the multifarious challenges in all areas — including those in the political, social, economic, governance, human rights and other fields. The partnership approach recommended by the Economic and Social Council's Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau constitutes a well-considered strategy that we fully support. We hope that the Government of Guinea-Bissau will seize the opportunity that this partnership approach offers. We also hope that it will take the necessary steps to facilitate a constructive dialogue with the international community.

In our view, progress could be made if both the Government of Guinea-Bissau, on the one hand, and the international donor community, on the other — including the Bretton Woods institutions — were to place the interests of the common people — the citizens of Guinea-Bissau — above all other considerations. Social and economic issues need to be addressed simultaneously with political and security matters. Some way ought to be found to provide assistance to countries facing special circumstances, such as Guinea-Bissau, despite their structural and political problems. We must heed the advice coming from sensible quarters that it is timely for the international community to take the bold step to invest a little now in the peace-building effort in Guinea-Bissau rather than facing the prospect of spending much more in peacekeeping and enforcement in case — God forbid — that country were to relapse into conflict.

The joint mission of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council to Guinea-Bissau later this month offers an opportunity to reassess our approach to the situation. The presidential statement to be adopted today contains a balanced message addressed simultaneously to the Government of Guinea-Bissau and to the international community. That message will provide the mission with a good basis to work to achieve common ground between the concerns of the Government and the donor community. In that way we hope that the Council will advance the twin agendas of peacekeeping and development in Guinea-Bissau.

Mr. Raytchev (Bulgaria): First of all, I would like to join previous speakers in extending our thanks to you, Mr. President, for organizing this timely meeting of the Security Council. We welcome this opportunity to exchange views on the situation in Guinea-Bissau. I would also like to thank the Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. David Stephen, for his detailed briefing. We also welcome the participation and contributions of Ambassador Kumalo, in his capacity as the Chairman of the Economic and Social Council's Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau, and of the representative of Gambia on behalf of the Group of Friends of Guinea-Bissau.

Bulgaria fully associates itself with the statement of the Greek Presidency of the European Union adopted on 18 June 2003. I would like to make just a few comments in my national capacity.

My country, like others, is concerned about the political and institutional instability in Guinea-Bissau, as well as about the worsening economic and social problems in that country. The troubling information that continues to emerge about the human rights situation is of particular concern to us. We agree that every effort should be made by the national leadership of Guinea-Bissau to make sure that the peace-building process is put on the right track.

We concur with the Secretary-General's view that the forthcoming legislative elections are regarded as a crucial test of Guinea-Bissau's nascent democratic process. The importance of organizing timely, free and fair legislative elections cannot be overemphasized. Bulgaria fully supports the principles set out in the

European Union Statement on Guinea-Bissau for organizing transparent and democratic elections. We expect that the authorities of Guinea-Bissau will take the necessary action in order to ensure equal opportunities for all participants in the forthcoming elections. We welcome the readiness of the donor community to provide assistance for holding the elections if the Government of Guinea-Bissau adheres to internationally recognized legal procedures.

Bulgaria shares the view that respect for the principles of democracy, the rule of law and good governance are essential for the political and economic development of Guinea-Bissau. We express our concern with regard to the weakening of the rule of law and of the independence of the judiciary system, as well as with regard to infringements upon freedom of expression and access to information. In our view, concrete steps need to be taken at an early stage in order to address this situation. In that regard, we express the hope that the Constitution will be promulgated and that the President and Vice-Presidents of the Supreme Court will be elected as soon as possible.

We note with concern that the human rights situation in Guinea-Bissau has become more fragile. The report of the Secretary-General contains worrisome information regarding that issue. While we note that the reopening of the independent *Radio Bombolom* was a step in the right direction, we believe that there is much to be done in order to restore a climate of trust and national reconciliation in the country and to ensure that human rights and civil liberties are fully respected.

Bulgaria appreciates the involvement of the United Nations system in the efforts of the international community to address the peace-building needs of Guinea-Bissau. We are grateful for the contribution made by the Security Council's Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, which agreed last year on a set of useful recommendations on Guinea-Bissau. We also highly appreciate the work done within the framework of the Economic and Social Council to help the peace-building process in the country. It is our hope that the authorities of Guinea-Bissau will respond in a positive manner to the partnership approach defined by the Economic and Social Council's Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau.

In conclusion, I would like to express our appreciation for the role played by the Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau, Mr. David Stephen, and the entire staff of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau in supporting the consolidation of democracy and promoting the rule of law and the protection of human rights. We also appreciate the draft text of the presidential statement prepared by the delegation of France, and are ready to support it.

Mr. Arias (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me, first of all, to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting, which will facilitate a thorough debate of the situation in Guinea-Bissau at a particularly opportune moment, given that the Security Council mission to West Africa will visit that country in a week's time. We are certain that today's debate will enrich the content of our meetings in the field.

The latest report of the Secretary-General on Guinea-Bissau (S/2003/621) clearly states that the overall situation has worsened and that it is on a downward spiral. The political and institutional instability, the lack of a clear separation between executive, legislative and judicial powers and uncertainty with respect to elections are all cause for concern. With regard to the latter point, we attach particular importance to the holding of elections as soon as possible, so long as the necessary conditions are in place to guarantee that the elections are free and fair.

Moreover, the human rights situation and the worsening socio-economic situation are also priority issues to which the Guinea-Bissau authorities must devote their efforts, with the support of the international community.

In addition to the role being played by the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, we also welcome the efforts being made at the subregional level, in particular by the Organization of Portuguese-speaking African States and the Economic Community of West African States. We urge those organizations to pursue their activities in this area, since the strengthening of regional and subregional mechanisms is extremely important in the African context.

In conclusion, the statements we have heard in this meeting reflect the willingness of the international community to support the essential efforts that must be

made by Guinea-Bissau's leaders to ensure that the country will emerge from its current crisis.

Mr. King (United Kingdom): We are grateful to the Secretary-General for his report and to David Stephen and Ambassador Kumalo for their very helpful introductory remarks today.

The situation in Guinea-Bissau is very worrying. The political process appears to be stuck. We are disappointed at the lack of progress on the promulgation of the constitution, at the lack of continuity in the Administration caused by frequent ministerial changes, and at the increasing likelihood that legislative elections will again be postponed.

We are also concerned about the continuing tensions in the military. We hope that Guinea-Bissau's African partners are making it clear that unconstitutional methods of proceeding will not be tolerated. We are particularly alarmed by the deterioration in the human rights situation, including lack of press freedom and the undermining of the independence of the judiciary.

The primary responsibility for improving the situation lies with the President and the Government of Guinea-Bissau. We are making this clear in the proposed presidential statement and we agree with the points which previous speakers have made in this respect. The European Union's declaration on Guinea-Bissau complements these messages.

The Security Council mission to West Africa later this month will start in Guinea-Bissau. It is indeed timely, as David Stephen and a number of other speakers have noted, and we are pleased to be working with the Economic and Social Council again on this subject. We are also very grateful to Ambassador Aguilar Zinser for sharing the leadership of the West African mission.

The mission must send a tough message. The international community stands ready to help Guinea-Bissau in many areas, but needs the Government of Guinea-Bissau to show genuine commitment to free and fair elections and to sound financial management. This is what was agreed in the compact proposed by the Economic and Social Council mission last November. The Government of Guinea-Bissau must start seriously to deliver.

In conclusion, we commend all those who are working to improve the situation in Guinea-Bissau and, in particular, David Stephen and the staff of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Russian Federation.

We are grateful to Mr. Stephen, Ambassador Kumalo, Ambassador Grey-Johnson and the representative of Guinea-Bissau for their participation in this meeting and their contributions to the discussion.

Like other Council members, we agree with the major conclusions of the Secretary-General's report. We note with concern the ongoing deterioration of the situation in Guinea-Bissau, as has already been noted in some detail, and agree that rectifying the situation and a genuine resumption of democratic processes in that country depend directly on the holding of free, fair and credible parliamentary elections. We believe that the Government of Guinea-Bissau is doing its utmost to ensure a prompt and full conclusion of the necessary pre-electoral work and the conduct of parliamentary elections on a democratic basis.

Given the exacerbation of social tensions in Guinea-Bissau, we also believe it important for the donor community to respond favourably to appeals by the country's Government for financial, logistical and technical support. Like other Council members, of course, we support and highly appreciate the efforts of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau and the Group of Friends of Guinea-Bissau.

The work of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau of the Economic and Social Council has created a new mechanism of cooperation between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council with respect to countries engaged in post-conflict peace-building. We consider the Ad Hoc Advisory Group to be a useful instrument, allowing the Economic and Social Council, within its mandate, to become more actively involved in the practical issues of prevention and peace-building. We have already heard specific examples today of how useful it has been in Guinea-Bissau. We recognize the importance of this and similar groups in averting renewed conflict in the country and in serving as a focal point of international efforts to meet the critical challenges of a return to normalcy, of fulfilling the attendant urgent

needs of the population, and of developing a long-term programme to assist in the country's sustainable socio-economic development.

We believe it would be useful to establish a mechanism for two-way liaison between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council, whereby political issues that arise in the course of peace-building are brought to the Security Council's attention in order to ensure subsequent political support for the post-conflict restoration of Guinea-Bissau.

Today's discussion confirms the importance of increasing interaction between the two Councils in the area of post-conflict peace-building and recovery. This is an area in which there is a pressing need for mutually complementary efforts between these major United Nations bodies.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

After consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council, recalling its previous statements on Guinea-Bissau, including the statement of its President of 29 November 2000 (S/PRST/2000/37), having considered the report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and on the activities of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in that country (S/2003/621), and anticipating the Council mission to Guinea-Bissau, expresses its concern with regard to the fragile political situation in Guinea-Bissau, to the persistent economic and social crisis and to continuing disturbing information regarding the human rights situation. It urges the country's leaders and the international community to work more purposefully together to ensure that the development, humanitarian and peace-building agendas are quickly put back on track.

"The Security Council appeals to the President and Government of Guinea-Bissau to timely and effectively organize the forthcoming legislative elections and to ensure that these elections are conducted in a transparent, fair and credible manner, in accordance with the Constitution and the electoral law. It is the Council's expectation that candidates as well as political parties will not be subjected to violence and intimidation, and that the presence of international observers at these elections will be acceptable to all parties. The Council also expresses the hope that, following the successful conduct of the elections, the Government will embark on additional concrete measures to show further proof of its commitment to democracy and the rule of law by promulgating the new Constitution and by having the President and Vice-President of the Supreme Court duly elected without further delay.

"The Security Council calls on the Government of Guinea-Bissau to take the necessary steps to facilitate a constructive dialogue with the international community and the Bretton Woods institutions and to fully endorse the partnership approach defined by the Ad Hoc Advisory Group of the United Nations Economic and Social Council on Guinea-Bissau.

"The Security Council appeals to the donor community to contribute financially to the implementation of the political and economic process in Guinea-Bissau, including necessary support for the legislative elections.

"The Security Council expresses its concern with regard to the situation of human rights and civil liberties and urges the Government of Guinea-Bissau to take the necessary measures in order to improve this situation. It stresses the importance that freedom of speech and freedom of the press be fully respected.

"The Security Council acknowledges the importance of the regional dimension in the solution of the problems faced by Guinea-Bissau and, in that regard, calls on the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Organization of Portuguese-speaking African Countries (PALOPS) to further strengthen their involvement and expresses its intention to intensify its cooperation with these organizations.

"The Security Council welcomes the willingness of President Kumba Yalá to host negotiations on the issue in Casamance and appeals to him to continue to cooperate constructively with the Government of Senegal in order to contribute to a solution of this issue.

"The Security Council recognizes and commends the important role played by the Representative of the Secretary-General as well as by the United Nations country team towards helping consolidate peace, democracy and the rule of law and expresses its appreciation for their activities.

"The Security Council expresses its full support for the forthcoming mission to Guinea-Bissau, to be led by the Permanent Representative of Mexico and which will be the first part of an overall mission to West Africa, and looks forward to its conclusions and recommendations.

"The Security Council expresses its intention to keep the situation in Guinea-Bissau under regular review."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2003/8.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.